

Top Car Seat Errors

Harness too loose

The harness is the critical part of the car seat that prevents your child's forward movement. When the harness is snug against the child, it decreases the risk of head and neck injury.

Car seat not tight/using the wrong seat belts

The majority of seats are not tight because the parent/guardian was unaware of how the seat belts work with the car seat. There are two ways to secure a car seat in the vehicle. The seat belt can be used in any seating position, but it must be locked to hold the seat securely. The other option, available since 2002, is the LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children) method. This system is explained in your vehicle manual, and the seat attaches by hooking the designated straps to a metal bar in the right (bottom) of the seat. The strap also must be pulled tightly so the seat does not move more than an inch at the belt path any direction.

Chest retainer clip not at armpit level

The plastic pieces that hold the harness straps together are pre-crash positioning devices. In a crash without the correct use of the retainer clip, the harness could slide off the shoulder. In order for the harness straps to perform adequately, the retainer clip must be in the correct position at the armpit.

Child forward facing too soon

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children ride rear facing at the bare minimum of 2 years of age. Seats on the market now will allow children to ride rear facing until they are 30 pounds.

Riding in a recalled car seat

Many recalls are related to a car seat's safety features. Always fill out the manufacturer's card to be notified of any recalls.

Child too heavy for seat

You can find the weight and height limits on the stickers on the car seat.

Seat too old

The Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association recommends that seats be discarded after six years. Many seats now are marked with an expiration date. All safety experts recommend using a seat that is less than 10 years old.

Inappropriate padding in the car seat

There should never be any extra padding, blankets or infant head supports that go behind or under the child. Blankets can be on the sides, around the head or at the crotch, and should never interfere with the harness position.

Using a second-hand seat

Buying a used car seat may mean not knowing the history of the seat, whether it has been in a crash, missing instructions or mandated stickers. Car seats are only tested for one car crash and should never be used after a crash.

KENTUCKY'S PRECIOUS CARGO

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR LOCAL KENTUCKY STATE POLICE POST 1-800-222-5555

OR VISIT WWW.KENTUCKYSTATEPOLICE.ORG



Keeping Our Children Safe

Our children are the most precious cargo we carry while in our vehicles. But sadly, 80 - 90% of all child safety seats are not installed properly. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children under the age of 14.

Kentucky State Police want to make sure your child is properly restrained while traveling in your vehicle. This brochure will walk you through the steps to make sure your child has a safe ride every time!



Infant seat

These seats should be used for babies from birth to 22-30 pounds and less than 30 inches (check your seat rating).

- ALWAYS read your seat and vehicle Instructions regarding car seat installation.
- The seat MUST ALWAYS be installed rear-facing.
- NEVER place a rear-facing seat in front of an active airbag.
- Harness straps should come through the slots in the back of the seat at or just below the level of your baby's shoulder.
- Keep the harness clip at armpit level.
- ALWAYS keep the harness strap snug. You should not be able to pinch any of the harness straps.
- The seats should be reclined at a 30 to 45 degree angle.

Rear-facing convertible

These seats should be used for babies from 20 to 40 pounds who have outgrown the limits of an infant seat.

- READ the labels on the seat to see the weight and height limits for your child now and for his or her growth later.
- Keep your child rear-facing in this seat until he or she reaches the seat's upper weight and height limits. Most seats will accommodate children up to 30 pounds, and some will accommodate up to 40 pounds.
- Continue to keep the harness snug and at or just below shoulder level. Keep harness clip at armpit level.
- Put the recline adjuster in the appropriate position for a rear-facing seat.

Forward-facing convertible

- Turn the seat forward when the child has reached the upper limits for a rear-facing seat.
- The seat must be re-adjusted for the forward position. Change the recline adjuster to upright and change the harness to above the shoulders.
- Forward-facing harness weight limits vary from seat to seat. Your seat may list 40, 50, 65 or 80 pounds.

Kentucky's Law

- Any child under 40 inches tall must be in a child and/or infant seat.
- Any child, who is younger than 8 years of age and is between 40 and 57 inches tall, must be in a booster seat.

Toddler car seat/belt-positioning booster seat

Toddler seats are forward-facing only seats. Read the label for minimum and maximum weight limits. They have a full harness (with a noted weight limit) that can be removed for use as a booster seat. The booster seat will have another weight limit.

- Keep your child in the full harness until the upper weight limit for the harness has been reached.



Your child is much safer riding in a full harness for as long as possible.